

You Must Bow at the LGBTQ Altar or Else

Read Time: 4 Minutes 16 Seconds

Do you remember when the main goal of LGBT activism was creating an atmosphere of “tolerance and acceptance”? Those days are long gone, and the goal posts have been moved dramatically. Today, if you do not partake in the public, mandatory celebration of LGBTQ Pride, you will be marked and you will be ostracized. If you don’t believe me, just ask NHL hockey player Ivan Provorov.

Provorov, who is from Russia and plays on the Philadelphia Flyers, declined to participate in pregame warmups for the Flyer’s LGBTQ Pride night, since he would have been required to wear a Pride-themed jersey.

He explained to reporters, “I respect everybody and I respect everybody’s choices. My choice is to stay true to myself and my religion [which is Russian Orthodox]. That’s all I’m going to say.”

In other words, if someone identifies as LGBTQ, that’s their business, and he respects that. He has his own religious beliefs which dictate how he lives, and he would ask others to respect that. Live and let live.

Flyers coach John Tortorella was supportive of Provorov’s choice, explaining that the team made clear where it stood on LGBTQ Pride. As for Provorov himself, Tortorella said that “he is being true to himself and to his religion. This has to do with his beliefs and his religion. That is one thing I respect about Provy, he is always true to himself, so that’s where we’re at with that.”

But not everyone was as tolerant (remember that word?).

According to hockey journalist Pierre LeBrun, if Provorov really respected the LGBTQ community, he would have participated in the event and worn the jersey. To paraphrase, "Who gives a hoot about his religious convictions? To respect someone means to celebrate who they are and what they do, even if it is in fundamental contradiction to one's own beliefs and convictions."

Hockey commentator Gord Miller seconded LeBrun's sentiments, adding that Provorov should have been banned from playing in the game. After all, he tweeted, "Freedom of expression doesn't give you freedom from the consequences of your words or actions."

To paraphrase again, "Failure to celebrate LGBTQ Pride has serious professional consequences!"

Sports and comedy writer Rachael Millanta was even more blunt, calling Provorov "ignorant, obnoxious and homophobic," also referring to people like him as "bigots" who "hide behind their cherry-picked religion."

Oh, the beauty of open-minded, liberal tolerance!

So, by Provorov following the consistent Christian teachings of the last 2,000 years (or, more broadly, the consistent biblical teachings of the last 3,000+ years), he is an ignorant, obnoxious and homophobic bigot who is cherry-picking his beliefs.

The same can be said for the tens of millions of Russian Orthodox Christians who share these beliefs, along with many hundreds of millions of other Christians of like heart and like mind.

In short, you can not graciously disagree. You can not respectfully opt out. Instead, you must deny your convictions, rewrite the Bible, run roughshod over your faith and publicly celebrate something you believe to be wrong. Otherwise, you

are a crass human being and a small-minded bigot. Those are your only choices!

Already in 2011 in my book “A Queer Thing Happened to America,” I could point to the Riddle Homophobia Scale, used in schools to evaluate whether the students were “homophobic.” According to the scale, both tolerance and acceptance were considered homophobic, since homosexuality was not something to “tolerate” or “accept.”

Instead, the only way not to be homophobic was to embrace a “positive” attitude which called for “support, admiration, appreciation and nurturance.”

Yes, if you don’t want to be a homophobe, you must admire your lesbian friend. You must nurture your transgender colleague’s new identity. Otherwise, you will be marked.

Are you surprised?

Well, consider this: “The Riddle homophobia scale was developed by Dorothy Riddle in 1973–74 while she was overseeing research for the American Psychological Association Task Force on Gays and Lesbians.”

That’s how far back it goes, although it wasn’t widely released until 1994. That’s why I started my article with this question: “Do you remember when the main goal of LGBT activism was creating an atmosphere of ‘tolerance and acceptance’?”

Most young people, including young adults, do not remember this time because they never experienced it. Instead, they have grown up with the choice to celebrate LGBTQ pride or be branded, to comply publicly or be ousted.

That’s why one of the chapters in my forthcoming book “Why Have So Many Christians Left the Faith” is titled, ‘If Gay Is Good, Christianity Is Bad.’ That’s how much the tables have turned, even though the testimony of Scripture remains as

clear today as it has ever been.

One of my colleagues, who is now a pastor, worked for years as a computer programmer with Bank of America. He told me that little by little, he was getting pushed out of his job through LGBTQ activism. By the time he quit, every employee, let alone higher-level manager or executive, could see on your bio whether you identified as an LGBTQ ally. If not, you could virtually kiss your career advancements goodbye.

 Provorov is just the latest example of this reverse bigoted, small-minded, judgmentalism which leaves us with only one ethical choice: We will continue to love our LGBTQ neighbor as ourselves and we will refuse to back down on our convictions regardless of cost or consequence. That's what Jesus would have us do.

Update: Since writing this article, it has been reported that, "Jerseys for Philadelphia Flyers defenseman Ivan Provorov have sold out online days after the 26-year-old refused to wear a gay pride-themed jersey for religious reasons." {eo}

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